

PEACE NOT APARTHEID: MORE FICTION THAN FACTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, in today's Washington Post, former President Jimmy Carter defended his book, "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid."

President Carter wrote, "... most critics have not seriously disputed or even mentioned the facts ..."

But after reading the book, I have become a critic and today will only correct the facts that he purports in his book. Regarding our policy towards Israel, there is little room for mistakes, let alone outright misstatements of fact.

For that reason, I want to present to the House eight factual inaccuracies found in President Carter's book.

Error number one, on page 62, President Carter quotes Yasser Arafat as telling him, "The Palestinian Liberation Organization has never advocated the annihilation of Israel." No evidence is provided, and the book does not contain a single footnote.

Fact check, article 22 of the PLO's charter states, "The liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence." Yasser Arafat supported this charter, and he directly lied to President Carter.

Error number two, on page 57 President Carter writes, "The 1947 armistice demarcation lines became the borders of the new nation of Israel, and were accepted by Israel and the United States, and recognized officially by the United Nations."

Fact, the 1949 armistice lines were never accepted as the official borders of Israel, United States or the United Nations. The error reflects a very poor attention to detail in the book.

Error number three, on page number 127, President Carter writes that there was "a surprising exodus of Christians from the Holy Land."

Fact, Israel is one of the only Middle Eastern nations where the Christian community has grown in the last half century. But Christian communities and other faith communities like Baha'is have dropped in size in many Muslim nations.

Error number four, on page 152 President Carter writes, "It was later claimed that the Palestinians rejected a 'generous offer' put forward by Prime Minister Barak with Israel only keeping 5 percent of the West Bank. The fact is no such offers were made."

Fact, according to President Clinton's lead negotiator, Ambassador Dennis Ross, Prime Minister Barak accepted President Clinton's proposal, offering to withdraw from 97 percent of the West Bank, to dismantle isolated settlements, and to accept the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Arafat rejected this proposal, and a quick call between President Carter and President Clinton would have corrected this error.

Error number five, on page number 148 President Carter presents two maps he claims were considered at Camp David, one of them labeled "Israel's interpretation of Clinton's proposal."

Fact, there were no maps at Camp David. The map President Carter labeled as Israel's interpretation is a copy of a map that was created later by Dennis Ross for his book, "The Missing Peace." Ambassador Ross's map is a representation of an offer agreed to by Prime Minister Barak and rejected by Arafat. President Carter violated Ambassador Ross's copyright of the map.

Error six, on page 197 President Carter writes, "Confessions extracted through torture are admissible in Israeli courts."

Fact, the Israeli Supreme Court banned the use of torture in interrogations in a decision handed down by the court on September 6, 1999, by Supreme Court President Barak.

Error number seven, on page 188 President Carter writes, "Kadima had been expected to gain 43 seats based on its pledge of a unilateral expansion of the 'great wall.'"

Fact, Israel's Kadima Party ran on Prime Minister Sharon's platform of disengagement, a pledge to dismantle settlements and unilaterally withdraw from territory.

Error number eight, on page 215 President Carter writes that the one option for Israel is "withdrawal from the 1967 border as specified in U.N. Resolution 242."

Fact. The U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 does not define a border.

Madam Speaker, these errors, in fact, diminish the credibility of President Carter's book. President Carter is entitled to his own opinions, but not to his own facts. The errors I present here are only a sampling of the other errors included in his book.

Now, in the twilight of his career, with many at the Carter Center resigning from their posts, President Carter should recall the book and hire competent assistants to assure that his future work does not reflect such poor scholarship.

I want to thank, especially, Dr. Mitchell Bard and the Committee for Accuracy in the Middle East Reporting in America for helping compile this list of errors.

SEED DEMOCRACY IN CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, there is one nation in the world where seeding democracy right now might take root. It is Cuba. It is only 90 miles away from our shores, but we are using the same sort of wrong-headed thinking regarding Cuba that we are using in international affairs around the world with equally dismal results.

Today the Bush administration has draconian travel restrictions in place

for any American trying to visit family members in Cuba. It is their idea of promoting democracy by punishing the people we are trying to befriend. It makes no difference if a relative is well, sick or dying in Cuba. You get one chance every 3 years to visit Cuba legally. If an American visits a relative in Cuba and that relative is stricken by a heart attack the day after you leave, you cannot go back for 3 years.

The administration thinks that by cutting off families in Cuba from loved ones in the United States, they will encourage the overthrow of Castro.

When will we ever learn? This policy plays right into the hands of those who want to portray the United States as an arrogant bully willing to use innocent people as a wedge against a regime we don't like.

Our policy regarding Cuba is hurting innocent people here and there, not the government we have been trying to overthrow for a generation. It has hurt one of my constituents, an Iraq war hero, who came to the United States from Cuba 15 years ago risking his life coming on a raft floating in the ocean.

Sergeant Carlos Lazo made national headlines last year when he tried to get to Cuba to visit his teenage sons. Carlos is a man who joined the Washington National Guard to give service to his new country.

As a combat medic in Iraq, he risked his life to save others, and for his heroism he was awarded the Bronze Star. I had the honor to pin that medal on him in a ceremony in Seattle last year.

Carlos is an American citizen, a decorated war hero, and he is barred from boarding a flight to visit his family in Cuba. That is not how you promote democracy in Cuba or anywhere else for that matter. And the fact is, there are countless stories just like Carlos. It makes no diplomatic or strategic sense. We hurt U.S. interests by hurting U.S. citizens who reach out to family in Cuba.

Who could possibly be a better ambassador representing the United States than the blood relative of someone living in Cuba? The most powerful statement we could ever make to the people of Cuba is to let them interact with Americans who are related by blood or marriage.

Are the Cubans more likely to listen to U.S. propaganda or to a son or to a daughter? The answer is obvious, and it should be just as obvious that the U.S. needs to revise its travel ban to Cuba.

As it stands now, we are separating families. Instead, we should be reuniting loved ones. We don't promote freedom by denying it to innocent civilians, and we don't make new friends anywhere when an American citizen is denied the ability to visit a dying mother in Cuba. Imagine the propaganda of a press release, Americans barred from visiting mother on death bed in Cuba. A story like that can and will be used against us all over the world.

We don't gain from a policy that forces separate families, and it is time